

Editorial

The Revision of ISO Standards 14040–3

ISO 14040: Environmental management – Life cycle assessment – Principles and framework

ISO 14044: Environmental management – Life cycle assessment – Requirements and guidelines

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Dear Readers,

In the last week of January 2005, experts of ISO Technical Committee 207 met in Mexico City. In the first three days Subcommittee 3 Working Group 4 discussed on the new standard 14025 'Environmental Labelling and Declaration Type III', replacing the Technical Report 14025. This type is closely linked to LCA. In the second half of the week, Subcommittee 5 Working Group 6 continued the work on the revision of the ISO standards 14040, 14041, 14042 and 14043. The two exercises were bridged by a workshop on 'Environmental Declarations and Life Cycle Assessment' on Wednesday.

The revision of the ISO series 14040 has been started with the first meeting of the WG on December 2003 in Geneva, following the decision on a New Work Item Proposal (NWIP):

- The boundaries of the revision are to improve the readability of ISO 14040s, while leaving the requirements and technical content unaffected, except for errors and inconsistencies.
- The revision is to
 - gather all requirements in one **new standard**, keeping the structure of 'goal and scope', 'inventory', 'impact assessment', and 'interpretation' as separate chapters,
 - maintain 14040 as a **framework document**, but transferring all requirements to the new standard, adding to 14040 a general requirement of compliance with the new **requirement standard**.

The above mentioned needs were caused by the consecutive implementation of the 4 standards, starting with ISO 14040 in the year 1997 and finishing with ISO 14043 in 2000.

As a result, the working group developed two documents, **ISO 14040** named 'Environmental management – Life cycle assessment – Principles and framework' giving **general guidance**, and **ISO 14044** 'Environmental management – Life cycle assessment – Requirements and guidelines' covering

all requirements. The documents were sent as committee drafts to the national bodies for comments and vote until the end of 2004. The documents were approved with one negative vote (from Sweden), accompanied by about 300 comments on each document (14040 and 14044). Key topics – to be solved during the meeting in January – were, beside the discussion of all comments,

- comparative assertion → unsuccessful trial to shorten the complicated language, but very intensive discussion,
- a new definition on system boundary,
- a new text on LCIA results and LCIA profile.

During the meeting, all topics could be agreed with consensus, and the WG 6 secretariat finalised the editorial work in time after the meeting. The documents were sent to ISO central secretariat for release as Draft ISO Standards (DIS) for comments and vote. It is hoped that the follow-up meeting discussing the results can take place during the next Plenary Week of TC 207 in Madrid/Spain 10–17 September 2005. Precondition is the release of the documents before April 1st. In that case and assuming a positive vote, the standards will be published in the first half of 2006.

The proposed time table might be endangered because of the need for French and German translations, and especially because of the non-flexible behaviour of DIN insisting to follow all formalities. This may lead to a separate meeting of the working group, maybe two months after the meeting in Madrid.

Apart from these problems, thanks are due to the excellent and fast work of the group, the three conveners (M. Finkbeiner, Germany, A. Inaba, Japan, R. Tan, Singapore), and the secretariat (K. Christiansen, Denmark).

In addition, a taskforce (chairman R. Carlsson, Sweden) prepared a NWIP (New Work Item Proposal) to revise the Technical Specification 14048 on 'Environmental management – Life cycle assessment – Documentation of commercially and publicly available LCI data'. The results of the voting are expected for the Madrid meeting.